

USACHS
WRITING REQUIREMENT

CREATING VALUE CONSCIOUSNESS
AMONG OUR MILITARY CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

If you had to forfeit one freedom, which of the following would you choose to give up: economic freedom, political freedom, or religious freedom?

After you have wrestled with this question you will know a little more about that which you value. If you found your son cheating in his school work, how would you deal with the situation? Would you lecture him on the value of honesty which is important to you, or would you attempt to help him clarify the value of truthfulness in his own life? That is what this paper is all about.

How much of what our children hold as true do they really believe? How much do they cherish as not to be discarded because they really accept its value and not because their parents said that "this" is the thing to believe? When faced with a difficult choice by their peers, which will stand a greater test: the lecture given by their parents, or that which they themselves have decided upon, after much consideration?

Simon and many others have done in-depth studies on this subject and putting out diverse materials on methods and techniques that parents, teachers, adults, guidance counselors, etc. can use in helping young people clarify their own values. In this clarification process the child of all ages is made to repeatedly consider situations which will enable him to determine how he really feels about definite values.

Klevon, Simon, Brown, Rath, and Lang¹ carried out specific studies on the effects of value clarification techniques. Klevon worked with college sophomores at New York University. Focusing on attitudes, purposefulness, and friendliness, he found that when he kept a permissive atmosphere, the experimental group developed significantly in the first two but that in friendliness there was no difference between the experimental and control

¹Harmin, Merrill; Rath, Louis E.; and Simon, Sidney B. Values and Teaching (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 206-214.

group. Simon's study with high school students seemed unsuccessful because teachers found it difficult to master the techniques; so Brown, using Simon's plan, did a parallel study on the elementary level. The experimental children showed a remarkable improvement. Teachers and children enjoyed the process and the teachers reported that as a result of the experiment, they thought themselves to be more dedicated.

In 1960 Rath did a careful study of the effects of value clarification techniques on high school under-achievers. His goal was to determine if the students would improve in their school work and be more purposeful in their lives when their values were clarified. He found improvements in all students except the one with whom he could not develop good rapport. Lang believed these studies left some undecided issues so he conducted a parallel experiment with equivalent students receiving the same amount of attention but not undergoing value clarification techniques. His findings report that these techniques work well with the under-achiever but not as well with the apathetic or dissenting student. He also found that sixteen sessions which he used were insufficient to produce long-term effects.

We are all concerned with the restlessness and indecisions that plague many of our young people. This paper will deal with some techniques which can be used, strategies and processes available, and some outcomes of organized value clarification attempts when used with those same young people. After examining the techniques and methods we will attempt to demonstrate how these can be applied to children of military personnel by showing their specific needs and how these techniques are designed to meet those needs. Sometimes it may mean learning a new mode of communication, or suppressing the desire to rationalize our own values, but it always means providing the freedom and acceptance necessary if personal values are to emerge in the person with whom we are working.

I. VALUES

Values indicate all those beliefs, purposes, attitudes, etc. which are chosen freely after much consideration and which are cherished, prized, and acted upon. Traditionally values have been developed in much the same way for all of us: our parents or teachers set examples, pointed to other good examples, used arguments, limited choices, used emotions, enforced rules and regulations, and appealed to tradition or conscience. In the preceding methods the "correct" values were pre-determined and urged upon us. Adults who are teaching values sometimes feel that children are too young to choose for themselves, that value clarification is too time consuming, or that all sorts of poor choices will lead to serious problems. Feeling confused about their own values and ineffective in carrying out an organized program, they believe that "will power" is the whole answer and that indoctrination of values will lead to more obedient children. Another argument often used is that children derive security from being told what to do.

If these are the best methods of instilling values, why do we have so many people who act impetuously, irrationally, and sometimes with malice? Why can't we find more creative enjoyment in our free time? Why do we do things inconsistent with what we say we believe? As we speak about values we surround our children with indications of lack of purpose. We insist, we plead, we punish, and otherwise try to convince them of values which they should adopt and children find it easier to listen and to role play than to disagree with their teachers or parents.

Most of the people who experienced the inculcation, instillation, and fostering seem not the much better for it . . . We desperately need men and women who know what they want out of life, and who can name their names when controversy rages. We need people who know what is significant and what is trash, and who are not so vulnerable to demagoguery, blandness, or safety. The indoctrination procedures of the past fail to help people grapple with all the confusion and conflict which abound in these baffling days. . . More dangerous is the incredible hypocrisy we generate

when we live two-faced values and hustle the one right value to children . . . Indoctrination is not the answer. The only thing that indoctrination did for people in the past was to help them postpone the time when they began the hard process of hammering out their own set of values. Values simply can't be given to anyone else. One can't value for other people. Each individual has to find his own values.²

Today parents and teachers alike are looking for and becoming aware of a new method and technique for teaching values. Many of them are making real efforts to learn and implement value clarification techniques. At first a general awkwardness with the techniques may be encountered, but if the adult approaches these exercises with a sense of wonder, discovery and amazement in an atmosphere of acceptance, he will soon grow into his new role.

Some values are incidental to maturing: as we experience, we grow and learn. Out of these experiences we obtain general guides which give direction to our lives. These become our values; and understood in this context, values must be dynamic, changing, evolving and maturing as our relationships with ourselves, with others and with the world around us mature. Values seldom function in a vacuum: they are surrounded by complex circumstances, demands and forces, and what is really valued is what is finally lived.

Simon³ lists the following seven criteria for defining a value.

1. Choosing freely: a result of free choice with no coercion.
2. Choosing from among alternatives. A value exists only when there is a choice from among many alternatives; if no alternatives exist there is obviously no choice and no value can result.
3. Choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequence of each alternative. This eliminates impulsive or thoughtless choices which do not effect value selection.
4. Prizing and cherishing. When we value something we prize it, cherish it, respect it, and are happy with it. This is not true of all choices, but in our definition, values emerge from choices we are glad to make.
5. Affirming. When chosen freely a value may be publicly affirmed or even

²Simon, Sidney B. "Values Clarification vs. Indoctrination" Social Education (December, 1971, Vol. 35, No. 8) p. 902.

³Simon, Values and Teaching, p. 28.

championed by the chooser.

6. Acting upon choices. For a value to be present it must be effective. We cannot hold something as true and do nothing about it.

7. Repeating. A one time decision is not a value. True values tend to form a pattern in our lives. For these criteria to be applicable, all seven criteria must apply.

II. DINNER TABLE GAMES

Parents, particularly, are concerned with value-building or growth in values among their offspring. They know this does not occur without some special planning and care, but are often at a loss when it comes to a particular technique. Young people do not enjoy hearing us moralize and they are quick to recognize and point out discrepancies between what we say and what we do. Consequently parents feel uneasy and somewhat hypocritical and will often avoid direct confrontation on value questions with their offspring.

Dinner table games give these parents a perfect opportunity to help their children clarify their own values without putting anyone in the family on the spot; in fact, if anything, the whole family enjoys the games, gets involved in discussions which promote a unified search for understandings and they begin to appreciate one another's opinions more honestly. Perhaps the most important result is that each is permitted in this atmosphere to explore his real feelings on a variety of values without feeling any obligation to unquestioningly assume someone else's values or to explain his own. After he has participated in these games over a long period of time, certain patterns will emerge, uniquely his own, and certain values will be taken on by each member of the family: values which are freely and gladly chosen and which will stand up under stress because they were carefully hammered out and selected from among all the alternatives presented. The atmosphere for these games must be permissive, open, accepting and definitely not used for the purpose of hammering home a prechosen value. This does not imply that our children should not know what we stand for: our values must be clearly stated and they should know that they are our choice and what is best for us in our lives as we live them. But the name of the game is values clarification not inculcation and although we expect them to know and respect our choice of values few of us can know in our changing society and technology what our children should value at each moment nor can we be there all the time to do their valuing for them. We need to be more open and less up-tight about alternatives which may be a more creative approach to the same values

which we hold.

Some examples of dinner table learning may be seen in the following games. As the family becomes adept at using them, they will create their own versions especially suited to them or find new methods or games to achieve more complex choices.

Rank Order Game: children and parents alike examine moral decisions in rank order games; members of the family are given three items and each is asked to number them in order of his personal preference. Here are some examples.⁴

Which would you least like to be?

1. Very Poor
2. Very Sickly
3. Disfigured

Whom would you prefer to marry? A person with . . .

1. Intelligence
2. Personality
3. Sex Appeal

Which would you most like to improve?

1. Your Looks
2. The way you use your time
3. Your Social Life

If you had two hours to spend with a friend which would you do?

1. Stand on a corner
2. Go to a movie
3. Go for a walk
4. Go bowling

Whom do you like least?

1. A Shoplifter
2. A Drug Pusher
3. A Confidence Man

Which do you think is the worst?

1. To become (or get someone) pregnant (unwed)
2. To be dependent upon hard drugs
3. To date someone from another race

Another technique which a family can use is "I liked myself most today when I . . . " or "My day would have gone differently if I . . . ". "I wonder" is a good way to introduce the dessert: "I wonder why . . . ", "I wonder what

⁴Howe, Leland W.; Kirschenbaum, Howard; and Simon, Sidney B. Values Clarification (New York: Hart Publishing Company Inc., 1972) pp. 63-81.

would happen if . . .", "I wonder when . . .". After the family begins to enjoy the various games and gets quite serious about them they are ready for "fun things we love to do". This would be carried out in somewhat the following manner: each person lists numbers one to twenty down the center of a page and then lists twenty things he really loves to do. This could include anything as small as answering the telephone to going on a European tour. After each list is completed it should be coded. Some possible codings could include:

1. Placing a dollar sign by each item which requires \$5.00 or more.
2. Place a "P" by each item which is more fun to do with people, and an "A" by the ones which you enjoy doing alone.
3. Place a "5" in front of any item you probably would not have chosen five years ago.
4. Rank order your list from one to twenty.
5. Put an "X" in front of those which you have done in the last six months.
6. Put a "D" in front of anything of which your neighbors would disapprove.
7. Place a "PL" in front of those which require advance planning.

Many other indicative codings could be added. After this list is completed, each member looks over his own list and writes down five sentences which state, "I noticed that I . . .". New data makes new values and clarifying them generates a deeper awareness of that which we enjoy, we love, we are reluctant to trade. Knowing what we love is the first step toward using our time wisely. Once the family has become expert at various techniques, they are ready for reaction techniques to stories. For the story a periodical or newspaper article, preferably one that is controversial, may be used. If these are not available Simon has many such prepared stories. At the end of the story each person answers value questions. Responsibility for making up the questions to clarify the value can be a rotating assignment among family members. Any subject will do if it is exciting, controversial, or contains value choices. Military families have the added advantage of built in variety and may devise any of these games to fit their situation or special needs.

The family as a unit searches for its own meaning. The search could be creative, enjoyable and unified with each member emerging with beliefs and values distinctly his own, freely chosen in an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement, and creativity.

III. VALUE CLARIFICATION

We learn things on three levels: 1. Facts 2. Concepts 3. Values. It is not until we reach the values level that we begin to relate the subject area to our own lives. This gives the teacher a unique position in the values clarification process: a position the teacher is finally beginning to recognize and accept.

For too long, we have allowed our educational system to rest on the questionable assumption that educated people are also happy people and moral people. We have incorrectly assumed that the ability for rational and abstract thought also enables people to make value decisions. But cognitive ability does not automatically provide people with solutions to values problems. We have seen too many people who hold college degrees, but who are unfulfilled in their own lives, their marriages, their homes, and their jobs. We have also seen brilliant scholars contribute to the destruction of human life and the physical environment because they did not consider the consequences of their work, the lives of the humans affected, or the values their work encouraged.⁵

Our education equips us to meet with ideal situations but fails to prepare us for value decisions. Is it any surprise that subject matter so rarely carries over into students' daily lives?

Obviously the teacher cannot spend a whole day teaching values to the detriment of the subject matter, therefore, he should do value searching in his subject material. Teachers of humanities have no problem fitting value into their subject matter. Their problem would be to keep it out. Some subjects are not so obviously value-oriented. Math is one example of this: questions in teaching math might include, "buyer beware", "fair wages", "comparative shopping", "finance charges", "percentages of time spent in various activities", etc. Science lends itself to a focus on values when we apply scientific facts to our own lives: the effects of new discoveries on

⁵Harmin, Merrill; Kirschenbaum, Howard; and Simon, Sidney B. Clarifying Values Through Subject Matter (Minneapolis: Winston Press Inc., 1973) p. 23.

man's health, wealth, social condition; whether we spend our vacation rock collecting, visiting the Everglades, or planting a garden; whether our knowledge is being used to benefit man, or if it bypasses the general public and benefits a few; whether chemicals used in our home products are safe, and beneficial, or valueless or even damaging. Going deeper into some of them one may determine the cause, for instance, of lead poisoning, its incidence in specific neighborhoods, and what he can and should do about it. The same process should be carried out through other subject matters as well.

Unless one is in a position of parent, teacher, counselor, or friend, formal methods of value clarification cannot really be used. Informal methods can be introduced in any conversation. For instance, empathizing with the speaker and directing questions about that which he is relating enabling him to clarify his own thinking on the subject. This can be done very informally. A very unique and a special situation occurs in the classroom where a teacher can, over a long period of time and using a variety of strategies, help his students determine their choice of values. Some examples of classroom techniques are as follows.

1. Values voting: in this voting questions would be prefaced with "How many of you . . . "
 - a. believe a teenager should pay board, if earning money,
 - b. think social success is necessary for happiness,
 - c. have one special person you especially like being with.
2. Rank Order questions which we have discussed under dinner table games.
3. Either-Or Forced Choices. "Are you . . . "
 - a quiet pond, or a running brook,
 - a picnic table or a dinnette set,
 - a weeping willow tree, or a giant redwood,
 - a caution light, or a stop sign,
 - a revolving door or an open gate,
 - a roller coaster, or a merry-go-round.
4. Value survey. In the value survey the person is given a list of fifteen to twenty numbers and he is asked to rank them from the most to least important to him. Some values that may be included are: love, peace, comfort, respect, security, pleasures, accomplishment, honesty, happiness, wealth, health, friendship, companionship, success, etc.
5. Spread of opinion. In this technique the class works in groups. The group has to agree and present their findings to the rest of the class. Subjects should be controversial, such as, legalization of abortion, pre-marital

sex, grading system, corporate advancement, corporation taxes, etc.

6. I learned statements. This particular technique can be used as feedback for the teacher or person conducting the session but it also can serve to clarify values. Introductory sentences could be, "I noticed that . . . "; "I was surprised that I . . ."; "I was upset that I . . ."; "I learned that I . . .".

7. The Values Journal or Data Bank. In this technique the student keeps a values journal later to be examined, related, used as reference, or for clarification purposes. Obviously this can only be used after the student has become skilled at many of the other techniques.

In addition to these which have been explained there are: Values Focus Game, which facilitates a supportive and accepting environment; the -Ing Name Tags, which demands a public affirmation of values; the Partner Risk, which demands openness of the persons involved; the Alternatives Search, which provides students with practice in searching for real life situation alternatives; Brain Storming, which encourages creativity; and the Consequence Search, which encourages a determined search for consequences.

In order to implement these techniques the climate must be one of acceptance, permissiveness, encouragement, and creativity. Problems may arise if the teacher or parent feels compelled to rationalize, to defend his own values or to be in control in any degree of the students' final decisions. The teacher should insure his knowledge and mastery of the technique and be thoroughly convinced of its necessity before he can even attempt it. He should be familiar with value related behavior indicated throughout the process which would enable him to refrain from non-verbal reactions to student discussions, remarks, or decisions. This is not easy to attain quickly, but it is well worth working at.

Children of the military, because of their transient life style, would especially benefit from an organized or systematic program in value clarification. Since social values differ with each locale our military children are exposed to a wider variety of alternatives and particularly need to have some stability and organization in their method of value choices. Parents, Teachers, and Guidance Counselors in the military should be well informed concerning these clarification techniques and should probably attain some degree of mastery in their implementation. In fact, these techniques

should constitute a whole new method of communicating with others so that children of military personnel will have every opportunity to develop those values peculiar to their own needs. This is not to imply that children of the military are any more value-confused than their non-military counterparts; however, because of their flexibility greater care should be taken to insure an inner stability. If every person were aware of the possibilities of awakening in another a greater appreciation of what his own life was about, those with whom he came into contact would be more value conscious as a result of having communicated with him. Thus, the more military personnel familiar with this mode of clarifying values the greater the incidence of growth in value awareness among our military children. This holds true, of course, for non-military children also, but for our consideration, we have limited our discussion to the military.

These techniques could be applied in military classrooms as a matter of course, with tutors, teachers, and guidance counselors, skilled in the preceding techniques. Workshops could be arranged for parents or interested personnel to familiarize, and/or teach various strategies and techniques of value clarification.

Current literature concerning value clarification is profuse and easily attainable so that any interested person could become acquainted with these processes.

IV. SUMMARY

When we have freely chosen a value we defend it, publicly acclaim it, and we work for it: it becomes a pattern in our lives. We are better equipped to make value decisions which are consistent with that which we cherish. Children in the military are exposed to a wide variety of experiences, cultures, choices, and points of view. We could not possibly anticipate every circumstance which they might meet and have to cope with. The best preparation we can give them is an understanding of their own special values in an organized and systematic program. We have tried in this paper to present these methods and techniques which can be used by parent, teacher, and layman.

It is possible that with an emphasis on value clarification our children will acquire a greater stability, direction, and purpose in their lives. This may not always agree with what we would have chosen for them, but it will be distinctly theirs, and the ability to choose wisely is one of the greatest gifts that we could bestow upon them.

Value clarification as considered in this paper has not been implemented long enough to have been thoroughly tested. Some questions I would like to see answered would deal with long-term effects; the optimum age at which these techniques could be used; and the effectiveness of these techniques on emotionally disturbed children. Previous studies show that children become more vital and purposeful when exposed to value clarification but even these studies are admissably inconclusive or merely suggestive and there is much work to be done in this field. This technique, however, is most uniquely promising in that it encourages individual application and interpretation and aids the child in finding his optimum relationship with the world around him.

Military children become world-conscious before their civilian counterparts and many of tomorrow's leaders will emerge from among their number. Can we afford not to look more closely at Value Clarification techniques?

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